

Employing the Ability

Business Case for Hiring Persons with Disabilities: Prepared for the Pan Disability Connection.



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Executive Summary

Going to wait for you feedback before I do this

Myths around Hiring a Person with a Disability

Employers have many reservations around hiring a person with a disability, many of which are rooted in misconceptions and lack of education about this demographic.

Myth 1

Considerable expenses are necessary to accommodate employees with disabilities

In a study of 2000 employers 57% reported zero additional costs from hiring an individual with a disability. The remaining 37% reported one-time minimal costs under \$500¹. The Alberta Government's program Disability Related Employment Supports (DRES) program can be used to help purchase specialized equipment or make accommodations to your workplace².

Myth 2

Employees with disabilities will not be safe or will be more prone to accidents in the workplace.

98% of people with a disability rate average or better in work safety than their non-disabled colleagues¹. A study by DuPont also found that individuals with disabilities have a lower risk of injury at work than the average employee when exposed to the same hazards².

¹ Ready, Willing, & Able "Business Case - Hiring people with intellectual Disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorder" http://readywillingable.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/RWA_BusinessCase-OnlinePDF.pdf (2015)

² Alberta Human Service "Top 10 Myths of Hiring people with Disabilities" <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/disability-services/myths-of-hiring-people-with-disabilities.html> (July 31, 2014)

Myth 3

Employees with a disability are unreliable and will have high rates of absents.

86% of people with disabilities rated average or better on attendance than their non-disabled colleagues¹.

Myth 4

My worker's compensation premiums will rise if I hire someone with a disability.

Worker's Compensation rates are based on the hazards of the operation and the organization's accident record—not on how many employees have disabilities².

Myth 5

They will always need help.

People with disabilities are more independent than we think. Many have learned and adapted their abilities to allow themselves to live their lives and complete a myriad of daily tasks².

Myth 6

Individuals with disabilities are not as productive as employees without disabilities and are unable to meet performance standards.

DuPont conducted two surveys of 811 employers and 2745 employees with disabilities and in both cases over 90% of employees were rated to have average or better job performance. As well as a Louis Harris and Associates survey of 920 employers revealed that their employees with disabilities have about the same or higher productivity level and work as hard or harder than their employees without a disability².

[Please let me know if there are any other myths you would like in here or any information added to these ones.**](#)**

Case for Hiring

There are numerous reasons to hire individuals with disabilities. Many of which include positive economic and business related outcomes.

Value of Retention

For all industries in Canada, the average turnover rate is 49%. This is extremely costly for businesses when factoring in: training new employees, covering missed shifts and getting new staff up to speed with experienced staff takes time and resources. Corporate Leadership Council formulated a cost-per-hire amount for five categories of employees³: (rethinking disability)

- Executive: \$21,686
- Mid-level: \$8,291
- Entry level college: \$9,798
- Entry level non-college: \$5,436
- Internal: \$3,168

In contrast employees with disabilities have a significantly lower turnover rate, at just 7%⁴. Companies can eliminate the costly turnover process through hiring employees with long-term objectives and commitments.

“We have a zero percent turnover rate with our employees with disabilities. We have one individual who has been with us for 30 years and has never missed a shift” – Mike Stargratt, Regional Manager, Wendy’s Restaurants of PEI

Value of Reliability

In 2013 it was estimated that annually the Canadian economy loses about \$16.6 million due to absenteeism. Employees with disabilities repeatedly outperform non-disabled colleagues on attendance⁴. In the areas of punctuality, attendance, work quality, task consistency and overall proficiency, supervisors consistently rated the performance of people with disabilities the same as, or even better than, their co-workers⁵.

³ Government of Canada, “Rethinking Disability is the private sector”

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/disability/consultations/rethinking-disabilities.html#h2.4-h3.3> (2013)

⁴ Ready, Willing, & Able “Business Case - Hiring people with intellectual Disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorder”

⁵ “Taking Action: An HR Guide - Hiring and Retaining Employees with Disabilities”
<http://on.cme-mec.ca/download.php?file=h6z1z1ea.pdf>

Better Work Culture

Inclusive hiring does not just impact the individual hired but the team as a whole. 75% of inclusive employers surveyed by the Government of Canada stated that employing individuals with intellectual disabilities or ASD had been a truly positive experience. Members of these teams also consistently reported being proud to be a part of a workplace that valued inclusion and diversity⁴.

“People with disabilities have to work very hard to get a job and when they do get one, it is precious to them. They are very unlikely to resign or move to another company.” -Mark Wafer, Tim Hortons Franchises Owner

New Markets

According to the Canadian Government close to 40 million Canadians and Americans identify as having a disability, factor in their families and you have a large segment of the market. This segment wants to “see themselves’ in the products they buy and the businesses they support^{3,5}. In Canada people with disabilities have an estimated \$25 billion in spending power and the U.S Department of Labour estimated that customers with disabilities and their families, friends and associate make up a trillion dollars in the market⁵. In 2013 the Canadian Government found that 92% of individuals regarded companies hiring people with intellectual disabilities more favorably than their competitors and 87% of people indicated they would prefer to give their business to companies who hire people with disabilities. By becoming an inclusive workplace employers build understanding and knowledge around this target audience, which builds a competitive advantage through tapping into the market as an employer and marketer.

Business Champions

Walgreens

10 years ago Walgreens started their commitment to integrate persons with disabilities throughout their operation. In 2012, nationwide Walgreen had 2,200 employees that self-identified as having a disability. To ensure success of all potential employees, Walgreens has partnered with hundreds of public funded human services agencies to source, prescreen and train potential candidates. This process includes a 12+ week training program which includes: teaching Walgreens culture, honing communication skills, completing simulations and gaining experience on the floor. Once trainees reach 90% productivity they are eligible for permanent hire, according to the inclusive HR manager “the success rate is great, virtually 100%” completion and hiring rate⁶.

Randy Lewis, a retired senior VP of supply chain and logistics, stated that most of the accommodations that had to be made to the warehouse “cost less than \$20 and used a paper and pencil”⁷. One of these accommodations included making the warehouse easier to navigate. Lewis noticed that numbers and directions were hard for many of his employees. So instead of numbering the aisle, management categorized them by animal names, different foods and items. All of which come with a corresponding picture and colour section assigned⁷. This slight accommodation had negligible costs, did not disrupt the functioning of the warehouse, but had huge positive impacts on the productivity and understanding of the workplace for employees with disabilities.

Tim Hortons – Megleen Inc

Mark Walfer owns 6 Tim Horton’s locations in Ontario, of his current 210 employees 33 have a disability. Over the last 17 years Mark has hired 82 people

⁶ Walgreens “Inclusion in Action - 2015/2016 Diversity & Inclusion Report” <https://www.walgreens.com/images/adaptive/si/sr/DiversityReport2016.pdf> (2016)

⁷ Bloom “Walgreen proves the business case for hiring ‘disabled’ staff” <http://bloom-parentingkidswithdisabilities.blogspot.ca/2014/03/walgreen-proves-business-case-for.html> (March, 24, 2014)

with a disability. Mark turned to an outside agency to help train his first inclusive hire, who is still with the franchise 17 years later. In the fast pace industry of fast food the industry turnover is around 75%, however Mark's stores have an annual turnover rate of 35%. He claims that it is "not because [he is] a better operator, it's simply because [they] hire people with disabilities"⁸. Based on Mark's records the average employee stays one year and 3 months with his company, whereas an employee with a disability stays seven years with little or none days missed⁹.

**** I would like to add a few more examples for Alberta****

⁸ Melinda Maldonado "Hiring those with disabilities easier than you think"
<http://www.canada.com/health/hiring+those+with+disabilities+easier+than+think+hortons+franchise+owner/7072413/story.html> (August 10, 2012)

⁹ We Belong "The Business Case - How we do it"
<http://webelong.ca/?portfolio=our-approach> (2017).

Understanding Disabilities

Every person with a disability is unique and has different strengths. This section general information to start understanding disabilities in the work place.

Definitions

TYPES OF DISABILITIES	DEFINITION
VISUAL	Refers to poor vision or constriction of the visual field in both eyes from any cause and is not correctable. It consists of three categories: Blindness, weak vision and colour blindness.
HEARING	Hearing disabilities refers to permanent hearing loss of varying degrees from any cause or the inability to hear at all or to hear clearly any nearby voice or sound. These deficits affect daily live and social activities.
PHYSICAL	Refers to a loss of motor function of varying degrees or to limitations in movements or activities resulting from deformed limbs or body paralysis r from deformity caused by damage to the structure or function of those body parts involved in mobility.
INTELLECTUAL	Refers to lower than normal intellectual ability and is accompanied by adaptive behavior disorders. This kind of disability results from impairment of the structure and functions of the

	nervous system, limits individual activity and participation, and requires all-round, extensive, limited or intermittent support.
MENTAL	Refers to psychiatric disorders lasting more than one year that manifest as cognitive, affective and behavior disorders affecting the daily life and social participation of the patients.
MENTAL HEALTH	Refers to a pattern of behaviors or emotions that can affect their work or social interactions. Symptoms can be occasional , episodic or cyclical.

Chart from Scielo Public Health

Do you think this is correct? ***

Scale of Severity

Still trying to work on a table for this.

Spectrum of Support

Still trying to work on a table for this.

Examples of Accommodations ****Please indicate if anything is needed****

Person with a Hearing Disability

- A note-taker or sign language interpreter for meetings
- Adapting emergency warning systems from audio only to visual cues as well
- Provide instruction in writing

- **Placing workstations where employee can see people approaching**
- **During staff meeting arrange everyone in a U-shape to improve visual lines to each speaker**
- **Visual cues on computers to replace auditory cues**
- **TTY Line**
- **Assistive Listening Devices**
- **Flashing lights on Safety Equipment**

Person with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

- **Reading written material to employee**
- **Instructions using pictures or diagrams instead of audio or written**
- **Checklists for employees to follow**
- **Allow employee to communicate verbally instead of in writing**
- **Dividing larger jobs into many small ones**
- **Additional training or supervision**
- **Longer and/or more frequent breaks**
- **Labeling and arranging items or material in order of use**
- **Colour coding material**
- **Beeppers to remind employees of deadlines or meetings**
- **Screen Readers**

Person with a Visual Disability

- **Information in large print, with high-contrast text.**
- **Double spacing text.**
- **Have option of braille for documents and signage**
- **Text to Voice readers**
- **Removing trip and fall hazards**
- **Keeping office items organized and in the same spot**
- **Optical devices - prism spectacles, magnify glass**
- **Line guides for signing documents**

Person with a Physical Disability

- **Regular breaks for rest or personal attendant care**
- **Removing trip and fall hazards and mobility impediments**
- **Auto-dialers**
- **Hand-free phones/head-sets**
- **Voice control devices**
- **Ramps**
- **Adjustable, ergonomic equipment and workstations**

Person with Mental Health Disability

- **Flexible scheduling**
- **Self-paced work schedule**
- **Additional supervision and more frequent meetings to address workplace issues and job performance**
- **Minimizing distractions by allowing employee to work in quiet space**
- **Repetition of information**
- **Reminders of important deadline or meetings**